

are the engines for our terrestrial weather patterns, the highway for international trade. Fifteen percent of the protein consumed by humans comes from the sea.

Beneath the ocean floor lies unimaginable quantities of oil, gas, coal, and minerals. Marine plants and animals possess inestimable biotechnological potential in the treatment of human illness. Coral reefs, sometimes described as the rain forest of the sea, contain uncommon chemicals that may be used to fight diseases for which scientists have not yet found a cure, such as cancer, AIDS and diabetes.

While the number of new chemical compounds that can be derived from land-based plants and microbial fermentation is limited, scientists have only just begun to explore the sea's vast molecular potential.

The oceans are our source, our sustenance and the key to our future survival. But the capacity of the seas to absorb our waste and fulfill our desires is not without limit. Twenty percent of the world's coral reefs have been destroyed, 20 percent and counting. Oceans are the dumping grounds for municipal trash, sewage and even nuclear waste. More than two-thirds of the world's marine fish stocks have been fished beyond their maximum productivity.

If our children's children are to inherit the ocean's bounty, we must come to understand and manage it far better than we do today; and I am confident the Exploration of the Seas Act will assist in achieving that goal.

I urge support of H.R. 2090. Mr. Speaker, we spend billions of dollars in outer space and NASA programs. I support that. I think it is fascinating that the Russians and Americans have achieved such amazing goals in our space station, but by contrast we spend pennies on explorations of our oceans. And yet our survival as a species depends on our oceans. This legislation will begin the process by which I hope the nations of the world, the great nations of the world, can combine our efforts and begin to devote the kind of attention that we need to devote to our oceans for our own survival and for the betterment of our species.

I again thank the chairman of the subcommittee and the ranking member for all of their support.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, while the gentleman was speaking, I thought back of all the efforts that we have been involved in together, Members of both parties, in trying to address one of the issues that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) just spoke of that namely the ocean is not the kind of expanse that can absorb our wastes for time unlimited. And during the time that we have been in the Congress, we have stopped ocean sludge dumping. We have been successful in passing the act to make sure that people do not dump medical waste in the ocean, which was

so important to my district and the beaches that I know the gentleman visits in the summertime.

We have been successful in making sure that chemical dumping is taken care of in ways outside the ocean.

There is one burning issue off the coast of New Jersey that the gentleman and I love very much, that is the shore that we love very much, and that is that this administration is currently issuing permits to dump contaminated dredge spoils off Sandy Hook. And these are the kinds of non-thinking, bad ideas that we need to avoid. The dumping of dredge spoils with contaminants such as mercury and lead and PCBs and other things that are poisonous to the human body and to the creatures that live in the ocean is something that we need to pay a lot more of attention to.

So while we have had some successes, we have a long way to go. And this bill creating an awareness and a study, a further study of technologies about what we can do and what we should not do and what we cannot do to the ocean environment, is extremely important.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SAXTON. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, once again, I appreciate that.

As the gentleman pointed out, the United States Congress has done a great deal, particularly with the leadership of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), in reducing the pollution that the United States adds to the oceans in reducing the over exploitation in which we engage. But the rest of the world continues in many parts, whether it is in India, or in China, in Asia. The Russians have a very long way to go, and that is why I think this international cooperation is what is really needed both to explore the oceans and to protect them for the future generations. And I thank the gentleman again for all of his support.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I again commend the gentleman for bringing this very good and important legislation to the floor.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to compliment and thank my good friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD), for his comments, especially as the author of this legislation, and thank also the chairman of our subcommittee for managing the bill now before the floor.

I want to note also so many things relative to oceans policy of our Nation. I think our Nation is one of the few nations, if we look at the geography alone, are from the Atlantic coastal States, the State of Florida in particular, the Gulf States and then the entire Pacific coast. Probably no other nation, in my opinion, has had this direct exposure to the problems, whether it be the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf

Stream, the areas relative to the Pacific area where ocean policy needs to be really firmly established as far as our Nation is concerned. And I thank the gentleman for bringing this legislation, hopefully, as a means of complementing what we are trying to do with other pieces of legislation.

I recall I recently attended a Conference on Marine Debris; the billions of dollars in costs for some of the things that I had listened to represented from some 20 nations in the Pacific region, and one of the things that I noticed quite well was their response in looking up to the leaders of our Nation to take the leadership in this effort because of the fact that we do have the resources and, hopefully, that we will commit such resources to assist in this effort.

I do not know if our colleagues are aware that every year we have to import over \$9 billion worth of fish from other countries. My question is: Why are we not producing enough of our own domestic consumption demand of fish in the States and in our own domestic consumption needs?

The situation of ornamental fish, it is about a \$6 billion industry. The point is that with the economics of all of this dealing with fisheries, I do think we do need to establish that policy. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) for this legislation and my good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON). I do urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me just say that the gentleman's help is very much appreciated. We need to understand issues like ocean dumping and this bill provides the forum in which we can look at the technology so that we can better understand. I thought we understood because we stopped dumping ocean sludge, sewage sludge in the ocean. We stopped dumping chemicals in the ocean, but we still have this burning problem of dumping contaminated dredge spoils in the ocean. It is a practice which is unwarranted, and this bill, hopefully, will provide an opportunity for the administration to understand that this is bad policy.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of H.R. 2090, The Exploration of the Seas Act. This bill requires the Commerce Department to contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to establish an advisory panel to study the feasibility and social value of creating a coordinated international oceanographic exploration and study program.

For too long crucial policy decisions regarding the development and use of our oceans and coastal regions have been made with too little information. Two years ago, at my initiation, President Clinton convened the first ever National Ocean Conference in Monterey, California. The purpose of the White House conference was to bring national attention on the need to protect and preserve our